

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-20

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 ISO-00 SSO-00 /021 R

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:RBMCMULLEN

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:KKURZE

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O 270649Z FEB 74 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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TOSEC 128

FOLLOWING PARIS 4927 SENT ACTION STATE INFO MOSCOW NATO
GENEVA BONN BERLIN FEB 26 RPT TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 4927

GENEVA FOR US CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR

SUBJECT: GROMYKO VISIT

REF: (A) PARIS 1481; (B) PARIS 4378; (C) BONN 028720;

(D) MOSCOW 2641; (E) USNATO 1035

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO QUAI OFFICIAL, GROMYKO'S
TALKS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT DURING FEB. 15-18
VISIT PRODUCED NO SURPRISES. HE CLAIMED THAT ATMOS-
PHERICS WERE GOOD, POLEMICS LACKING, AND WAY NOW CLEARED
TO BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU SUMMIT, MARCH 7-8 IN THE
CRIMEA. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FOR EAST EUROPE AND USSR OMNES SAID GROMYKO'S VISIT HAD
BEEN PRIMARILY AT SOVIET INITIATIVE AND WAS FOR PURPOSE
OF CLEARING THE WAY FOR BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU SUMMIT. HE
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ADMITTED THAT SOVIETS HAD INITIALLY INVITED JOBERT TO

MOSCOW, BUT THAT FRENCH HAD CONVINCED THEM IT WAS GROMYKO'S TURN TO COME TO PARIS. OMNES SAID THE SOVIETS WANTED THE SUMMIT MEETING TO MARK A NEW DEPARTURE IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS AND THAT GROMYKO'S MISSION WAS APPARENTLY TO INSURE THIS POSSIBILITY. ACCORDING TO OMNES, FEW CONVENTIONAL ISSUES WERE RAISED AND MOOD OF TALKS WAS CORDIAL. SUBJECT MATTER WAS PRIMARILY MULTILATERAL.

3. ON WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE, OMNES CHARACTERIZED GROMYKO'S ATTITUDE AS EXTREMELY PRUDENT. WHILE NOT CRITICIZING THE CONFERENCE AS SUCH, GROMYKO DID SAY THAT THE SOVIETS COULD NOT APPROVE ENTERPRISES WHICH SOUGHT TO DOMINATE THE ENERGY MARKET. THE FRENCH FOUND THIS STATEMENT CRYPTIC, AND CONCLUDED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE SIMPLY UNCERTAIN OF THEIR POSITION, GIVEN THEIR OWN MIXED INTERESTS AS BOTH A PRODUCER AND OIL IMPORTING COUNTRY. HOWEVER, OMNES STRESSED THAT HERE, AS ON ALL OTHER SUBJECTS DEALT WITH DURING THE TALKS, GROMYKO DID NOT CRITICIZE US ACTIONS.

4. ON CSCE, OMNES' DEBRIEF FOLLOWED GENERAL LINES OF REF. E. HE NOTED THAT GROMYKO HAD NOT SUGGESTED POSSIBLE COMPROMISES ON PEACEFUL CHANGE OF FRONTIERS AS KOVALEV HAD IN JANUARY (REFTEL A). ON BASKET THREE, JOBERT MADE STRONG REBUTTAL OF GROMYKO'S HARD LINE ON NON-INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, STATING THAT IF BASKET THREE ISSUES WERE WATERED DOWN, THIS WOULD BE DECEPTION FOR COUNTRIES WHICH HAD PLACED THEIR HOPES IN CONCRETE RESULTS FROM CSCE. GROMYKO THEN RAISED CBMS, ARGUING IN GENERAL TERMS THAT THIS ISSUE SHOULD NOT BE USED AS FORM OF PRESSURE ON SOVIETS. IN ADDITION TO LOCATION, HE MENTIONED THE THRESHOLD QUESTION ARGUING THAT WHILE A DIVISION MIGHT BE A RELATIVELY LARGE MILITARY FORCE FOR A SMALL COUNTRY, IT WAS INSIGNIFICANT ON THE SCALE OF THE SOVIET ARMY. AS AN ASIDE, OMNES NOTED THAT THE FRENCH WERE NOT VERY ENTHUSIASTIC FOR CBMS THEMSELVES AND THAT JOBERT HAD THUS NOT TAKEN GROMYKO ON WHEN HE MADE HIS PITCH. THE FRENCH WISHED TO AVOID BEING THE DEMANDEUR ON THIS ISSUE.

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5. WHEN GROMYKO URGED A SPEED UP IN THE WORK OF THE CSCE, JOBERT REPLIED THAT THIS COULD BE DONE, BUT IN THAT CASE ONE WOULD HAVE TO BE CONTENT WITH FEWER RESULTS FROM THE CONFERENCE. IF THE SOVIETS WANTED MAXIMUM RESULTS, THE WORK COULD NOT BE HURRIED. CONCERNING FOLLOW-ON, JOBERT SUGGESTED MEETING OF EXPERTS AFTER TWO OR THREE YEARS TO REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF CSCE DECI-

SIONS AND SAID HE WAS OPPOSED TO CREATION OF ANY FOLLOW-ON ORGAN. MUCH TO HIS SURPRISE, GROMYKO DID NOT PRESS FOR THE LATTER, INDICATING THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT INSIST ON A PERMANENT DECISION-MAKING ORGAN IF OTHER COUNTRIES WERE OPPOSED.

6. AS NOTED REFTEL D, JOBERT REPEATED FRENCH COMPLAINTS OVER LACK OF CONSULTATION DURING THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. ACCORDING TO OMNES, GROMYKO ADMITTED THAT THE SOVIETS COULD DO BETTER, PLED THAT IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY ABOVE ALL TO "PUT OUT THE FIRE" IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND ENDED UP BY VIRTUALLY APOLOGIZING TO JOBERT. ON THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ITSELF, GROMYKO SAID HE FELT IT HAD CERTAIN WEAKNESSES AND GAPS, AND CLAIMED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD URGED THE EGYPTIANS NOT TO ACCEPT IT WITHOUT LINKAGE TO SUBSEQUENT STAGES OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, HE AGAIN WAS CAREFUL NOT TO CRITICIZE THE ROLE OF THE US OR THAT OF THE SECRETARY. IN RESPONSE TO JOBERT'S QUESTION, GROMYKO CHARACTERIZED THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS "USEFUL," AND MENTIONED SOVIET EFFORTS TO PERSUADE SYRIA TO PARTICIPATE. HIS GENERAL TONE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HOWEVER, SEEMED "DETACHED."

7. OMNES OUTLINED GROMYKO'S REMARKS ON BERLIN ALONG LINES OF REFTEL C. HE STRESSED GROMYKO'S INSISTENCE THAT FEA WAS QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER, HE LEFT THE CLEAR IMPRESSION WITH THE FRENCH THAT HE WOULD NOT ALLOW THE PROBLEM TO PUT DETENTE IN QUESTION.

8. COMMENT. THE QUESTION REMAINS WHY GROMYKO FOUND IT NECESSARY TO VISIT PARIS AT THIS TIME. IF THE FRENCH ACCOUNT OF THE TALKS IS CORRECT, HE COVERED VIRTUALLY THE SAME GROUND AS KOVALEV DID ONLY A FEW WEEKS EARLIER
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(REFTEL A), WITH EQUALLY LITTLE ATTENTION PAID TO BI-LATERAL AFFAIRS. IF HIS PURPOSE WAS INDEED TO "CLEAR THE GROUND" FOR THE SUMMIT, HIS VISIT AOULD SEEM TO HAVE VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED ANY SUBSTANTIVE NEED FOR IT TO TAKE PLACE. MOREOVER, WHILE THE FRENCH CLAIM TO HAVE FOUND GROMYKO IN A RELATIVELY CORDIAL AND FORTHCOMING MOOD, HIS PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS WERE DISTINCTLY ON THE COOL SIDE (REFTEL B).

9. IN GENERAL, THE REPORTS OF GROMYKO'S TALKS REINFORCE OUR EARLIER IMPRESSION THAT HIS VISIT WAS A SOVIET PRE-CONDITION FOR THE SUMMIT AND THAT THE SECRECY IN WHICH IT WAS INITIALLY SHROUDED REFLECTED FRENCH FEARS THAT THIS WOULD BECOME KNOWN. APPARENTLY GROMYKO WAS SUFFICIENTLY SATISFIED TO PROCEED WITH FIRMING UP THE

BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU ENCOUNTER, WHICH ALTHOUGH IT HAS STILL
NOT BEEN FORMALLY ANNOUNCED, SEEMS SET FOR MARCH 7-8. STONE
UNQUOTE CASEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PETROLEUM, TOSEC 128, MINISTERIAL VISITS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PEACE TALKS, MUTUAL FORCE WITH DRAWALS, SUMMIT MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE038886
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:RBMCMULLEN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974025/aaaaaequ.tel
Line Count: 172
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) PARIS 1481; (B) PARIS 4378; (C), BONN 028720;
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <29-Aug-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GROMYKO VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR, XF, CSCE, (GROMYKO, ANDREY ANDREYEVICH)
To: DAMASCUS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005